

night presented a documentary called "So You Want To Buy A President?" whose thesis seems to be that campaigns are a charade, policy debates are a deceit and only money talks.

The narrow point, made by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), an early dropout from the 1996 presidential race, about millionaire publisher Malcolm S. (Steve) Forbes Jr., is that "somebody is trying to buy the White House, and apparently it is for sale."

The broader indictment, made by correspondent/narrator Robert Krulwich, is that Washington is gripped by a "barter culture" in which politicians are for sale and public policy is purchased by campaign contributions.

The program rested heavily on a newly published paperback, "The Buying of the President." Author Charles Lewis, the head of the modestly titled Center for Public Integrity, was a principal witness, and Kevin Phillips, the conservative populist author who wrote the book's introduction, was also a major figure in the documentary.

It dramatized the view asserted by Lewis in the conclusion of his book: "Simply stated, the wealthiest interests bankroll and, in effect, help to preselect the specific major candidates months and months before a single vote is cast anywhere. . . ."

We the people have become a mere afterthought of those we put in office, a prop in our own play."

Viewers saw a number of corporate executives—no labor leaders, no religious leaders, no activists of any kind, for some reason—who have raised and contributed money for presidents and presidential candidates and thereafter been given access at dinners, private meetings or overseas trade missions.

It is implied—but never shown—that policies changed because of these connections. As Krulwich said in the transcript of a media interview distributed, along with an advance tape, with the publicity kit for the broadcast, "We don't really know whether these are bad guys or good guys. . . . I'm not really sure we've been able to prove, in too many cases, that a dollar spent bought a particular favor. All we've been able to show is that over and over again, people who do give a lot of money to politicians get a chance to talk to those politicians face to face, at parties, on planes, on missions, in private lunches, and you and I don't."

If that is the substance of the charge, the innuendo is much heavier. At one point, Krulwich asked Lewis, in his most disingenuous manner, "Do you come out convinced that elections are in huge part favors for sale, or in tiny part?"

And Lewis replied that while "there are a lot of wealthy people that do want to express broad philosophical issues," the "vested interests that have very narrow agendas that they want pursued see these candidates as their handmaidens or their puppets. The presidential campaign is not a horse race or a beauty contest. It's a giant auction."

That is an oversimplified distortion that can do nothing but further alienate a cynical electorate. Of course, money is an important ingredient in our elections and its use deserves scrutiny. But ideas are important too, and grass-roots activism even more so. The Democratic Leadership Council's Al From and the Heritage Foundation's Robert Rector have had more influence in the last decade than any fund-raisers or contributors, because candidates have turned to them for policy advice.

John Rother of the American Association of Retired Persons and Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition work for organizations that are nominally nonpartisan and make no campaign contributions at all. But their membership votes—so they have power.

The American political system is much more complex—and more open to influence by any who choose to engage in it—than the proponents of the "auction" theory of democracy understand, or choose to admit.

By exaggerating the influence of money, they send a clear message to citizens that the game is rigged, so there's no point in playing. That is deceitful, and it's dangerously wrong to feel that cynicism.

Especially when they have nothing to suggest when it comes to changing the rules for the money game.

At one point, Phillips said that the post-Watergate reforms succeeded only in having "forced them [the contributors and politicians] to be more devious." That is untrue. Those reforms, which mandated the disclosure of all the financial connections on which the program was based, also created publicity which, even Krulwich and Co. admitted, foiled the "plots" of some contributors.

And Krulwich, for his part, suggested very helpfully that "every high-profile politician agrees that some things have got to change. Change the limits. Change the rules. Change the primaries. Change the ads. Change enforcement. You gotta change something."

How about changing the kind of journalism that tells people that politicians are bought-and-paid-for puppets and you're a sucker if you think there's a damn thing you can do to make your voice heard?

A TRIBUTE TO MR. AND MRS. JAMES ADAMS ON THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to two constituents who are an inspiration to all those who say "I do"—James and Helen Adams.

Mr. and Mrs. Adams of Riverside, IL recently celebrated their 50th anniversary with a large party with dozens of their friends and family members.

However, the real celebration should be for a young sailor and his 20 year old fiancée from Brookfield, IL who would not let even a world war from keeping them apart. With conflict still raging in the Pacific in June 1945, Jim Adams had planned to take advantage of a short leave to marry his sweetheart, Helen Jean Bennett. But, as is often the case in wartime, his leave was canceled and he was not able to get back home until December of that year, a few days before Christmas. Not only were there no churches available during the holidays for a wedding ceremony, there were no priests or preachers either. Finally, on New Year's Eve, a clergyman was found and the wedding took place in the bride's house.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Adams on not only their 50th anniversary, but also their perseverance and devotion 50 years ago that prevented even a world war from keeping them apart.

TRIBUTE TO AUTHOR R. NASH, JR.

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great delight that I take this opportunity to honor Art Nash for his many contributions to the State of Michigan through his work with the Department of State Police and the Department of Natural Resources. Art is retiring after 26 years of dedicated and loyal service to the Great Lakes State. His professionalism and exceptional work ethic will be sorely missed by those who have had the pleasure of working with him.

Art grew up in Dearborn, MI, and graduated from Fordson High School. He went on to Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI, where he obtained a bachelor of science degree in psychology and sociology in 1970. In addition to his academic pursuits, Art also participated on the varsity swim team and served as an officer of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. He would later return to his alma mater to earn a master's degree in public administration in 1980.

Art's professional career began in 1970 when he took the oath as a trooper with the Michigan State Police. He served until 1977 in the department's uniform and criminal investigation division enforcing traffic laws, investigating criminal and civil complaints, and serving as an undercover officer for drug traffic investigations.

In 1977, Art's career path took him to another division within the Michigan State Police. For the next 17 years, Art was an integral member of the department's fire marshal division, playing an important role in the division's growth. As a member of the fire marshal division, Art rose through the ranks from detective sergeant in the First District Office to first lieutenant commander of the hazardous materials section. As first lieutenant commander, Art was responsible for administering the division's Hazardous Materials Enforcement Program. This also included the task of developing and implementing division policies and procedures.

In May 1994, Art said goodbye to the Michigan State Police and took his talents to the Department of Natural Resources where he served as chief of the Department's underground storage tank division. Though his work with the DNR was less than 2 years, his accomplishments were monumental. I am extremely appreciative of his efforts in the development of the underground storage tank regulatory program and his role in the creation of the risk-based corrective action plan for leaking underground storage tank sites. Michigan residents are fortunate to have had the expertise and knowledge that Art has to offer.

Art's commitments also extend beyond the workplace. He is a member of the St. Luke Lutheran Church in Haslett where he once served as president of the church council. In addition to support from his church Art has also been blessed with the love and support of his wife, Jennifer, and son, Kirk.

Mr. Speaker, there are some people you meet in life that you feel very privileged to know. Art Nash is one of those people. I am extremely thankful that I had the opportunity to work with this man of great character while I